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## Lush Charges Against Rep. Rivers Demand Investigation by Congress

Congress, say Washington columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, "has set laudable standards which must be applied to other congressmen, whether white or black." The reference to "laudable standards" is to the punishment meted out by representatives to their colleague, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, D-N. Y. The implication that these standards aren't being applied to "other congressmen" is about Rep. Mendel Rivers, D-S. C.

It is the contention of Pearson and Anderson that Rivers is an alcoholic. In London, they charge, "he was found romping through a hotel corridor in his under-shorts." Rivers, to quote the columnists, "is a security risk. He can be trusted with a secret no longer than it takes him to gulp down a few jiggers of bourbon."

Rep. Rivers is Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. He is additionally a member of the House watchdog committee which oversees and supervises the CIA. Both posts place him in a position to hear and to know some of the nation's profoundest secrets.

Few Americans, we believe, would consign these secrets to the ears of a confirmed lush — in Congress, black or white. That is why, if Pearson's and Anderson's charges are true, the House should strip Rep. Rivers of his sensitive assignments.

Rep. Rivers is one of the capital's most powerful men. In the listing of 10 cities, which the Defense Department recently said would be provided with experimental anti-missile protection, should such a system be authorized, Charleston, S. C., of all places is among those named. San Diego on the other hand, probably the nation's most important naval base and a metropolis with a population just 2,800 short of 500,000 and greater than Charleston's, didn't make the select 10. The failure can be attributed

to the noteworthy, though not celebrated, fact that San Diego isn't Rivers' hometown.

Pearson and Anderson, it should be pointed out, don't suggest Rivers would knowingly divulge national secrets. But under the influence of alcohol his behavior is so bizarre, they maintain, that there is no telling what he might do. And, they add, since Rep. Rivers doesn't have either the decency or the good sense to resign his highly delicate posts, the House should act on its own in behalf of the national interest.

The charges against Rep. Rivers deserve the attention of his associates. Assuming the charges are valid—a matter, incidentally, Pearson and Anderson take for granted is well known to every House member — the next step is automatic. There can be no doubt as to which representative (Powell or Rivers) constitutes the larger menace to the nation.

Powell was never so strategically situated he could hurt his country to the extent that Rivers in an alcoholic fog might. No issue of security was involved in Powell's flamboyant escapades. Security, not alcoholism, is the issue where Rivers is concerned, precisely because of the crucial nature of his congressional responsibilities.

One can imagine how long Congress would tolerate a CIA director or a secretary of state who charged around London hotel corridors in attire appropriate only for the gymnasium or the bedroom. Among its own members, who are privy to the same information as the aforementioned executive officials, Congress must demand similar standards of discretion and sobriety.

To assert an allegation is not to affirm it. Rep. Rivers is entitled to be judged by his peers. But the charges against him are too serious to be shushed up, as was the Senate's handling of the Bobby Baker case.